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# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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Professor B. L. D'Ooge contributes to The Western Journal of Education for December, 1911, an article on The Classical Outlook. It is very desirable that an encouraging word should be spoken every now and then to the classical teachers of the country and Professor D'Ooge seems in this article to have qualified as a 'sunshine preacher'. He quotes a number of passages from Professor D. A. Penick's paper in The University of Texas Record, What Classicists think of the Classics, to prove that classical teachers themselves feel distinctly encouraged about the outlook and are holding fast to the dual reason of practical and cultural value for studying the Classics. He also lays stress on the unanimity of testimony as shown in Professor Kelsey's collection, Latin and Greek in American Education, and in the utterances of the more thoughtful newspapers. He sees great promise in the action of the Amherst Trustees with regard to the suggestions of the Class of 1885 and he finally adduces the figures of the report of the Board of Education for the last ten years to show that Latin is holding its own.

It seems to me that we have every reason to feel encouraged. Thoughtful people have always realized the value of classical study. They are now, however, expressing themselves more generously. Many modern language teachers realize that training in the modern languages is not as effective a discipline as that in the Classics. Some people are beginning to see that for practical purposes the study of German and French has but little more value for the ordinary American child than the study of Latin or Greek. Scientific scholars are beginning to confess that there can be too much science in the schools. But while all this is true, it is not well to draw too roseate a conclusion from either statistics or such action as that of the Amherst Trustees. Last year in discussing the question of statistics (THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 4.217) I disputed the conclusions as to any real growth in Latin study. The very statistics that Professor D'Ooge quotes show merely that during the last ten years Latin has held its own in the High Schools. The proportion of High School pupils taking Latin since 1900, when it was 49.93 per cent, has fluctuated from 49.42 in 1902 to 50.17 in 1905. In 1909 it was 49.59. Meanwhile Greek has practically

disappeared and the net gain of classical instruction in general is therefore a loss. This is accordingly no time to be slothful or to regard the battle as ended. We must still look to our methods and when we consider that the proportion of students studying German has risen from 16.09 in 1900 to 23.06 in 1909 we must reflect that after all our chief danger lies in the modern languages with their specious appeal to practical value.

It seems to me that Professor D'Ooge has also entirely misunderstood the action of the Amherst Trustees. The suggestions of the Class of 1885 have been referred to in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 4.129 and have been printed in full in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 5.2-4. The reply of the Trustees has been reprinted in part in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 5.11-12. This reply has been as a rule interpreted as Professor D'Ooge interprets it as a sign of a classical renaissance; and the fact that a certain encouragement has been given by the Trustees to the study of Greek has blinded the eye of the critic to the real hollowness of this encouragement.

The Amherst Trustees assure the Class of 1885 that all the things that are asked for in their memorial are already the common practice at Amherst, thereby intimating that the critics are unacquainted with what is going on at their Alma Mater. They further explain that they will not take any active steps to further the study of Greek in any real way, that is, by making the study of Greek necessary for entrance at Amherst, but they will appear to do something by establishing certain scholarships for those who enter in Greek, and by establishing also a lectureship in Greek Literature to be held by distinguished scholars, for brief periods. It is hardly likely that the discerning public will be deceived by this action. Amherst has a unique opportunity. It does not need students. It can pick and choose if it will. It need not bow down to the golden calf of numbers. It could readily do what weaker colleges would be unable even to try. The statistics of the honor men at Dartmouth and Wesleyan, recently published, in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 4.113, 161-162, 5.9, show that strong minds take naturally to Greek, *if they get a chance*. The chance is the main thing, and it is just this that is being almost universally denied them by the action of the educational authori-

ties in our public school systems, both in the East and in the West. If boys need Greek for entrance, they will study it, and then those that are robust in their intellectual strength will continue it. But if they do not get the beginning, how will they be able to continue? Thus far, Amherst has not improved its opportunity. What the Trustees have given is almost a subterfuge. It will not prove of any permanent value for that 'renaissance' of which Professor D'Ooge speaks. It is to be hoped that they will soon realize that an opportunity granted to almost no other college in this land should be improved with a most farseeing and conscientious thoroughness.

G. L.

### RESEARCH AND THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

#### I

The amount and the value of America's output in the field of original research in the ancient and the modern languages are frequently discussed, and variously judged even within the profession. At one end of the scale we have the estimate of certain critics who maintain that, if annotated texts of an elementary character, book-reviews, articles duplicating work done ages ago, with which the writer has been too lazy to acquaint himself, and mechanical compilations which indicate little more than trained industry, but were composed by their author to pad a bibliography, and justify his scholastic existence to the unenlightened, are left out of calculation, the residuum is small. These friends of scholarship sometimes go so far as to declare that the importance of original investigations in language and literature is ludicrously overrated, any way; that there is an unpardonable amount of time misspent in German universities and even in our own in the search for facts that, when ascertained, are of no moment to human life or happiness. But for such enunciations as these it is easy to find a corrective. The rapidly increasing productivity of American scholars evidences a wide prevalence of contrary ideas, and for the high quality of their work plenty of testimony exists in the writings of impartial foreigners. I have heard at least one widely experienced scholar, whose criticisms were notably conservative and judicial, prophesy that the primacy of Germany in classical philology was destined to pass to the United States at no distant future.

Much more commonly met with than the critic who disparages original investigations in this field is the man who considers such activity as the primary function of a university professorship. Fresh perhaps from study or a visit in Germany, where

limited hours of teaching and a generally protected life of a somewhat monastic nature are still possible to the professor, he is quick to inveigh against what he finds in his native land. As he describes the situation with rebellious fervor, all our university faculties number, especially among the abler assistant professors, those who, though burdened with twice or thrice the teaching hours of their brethren across the sea, yet perform in addition much clerical labor that a ten-dollar-a-week clerk could do sufficiently well, and too often on top of this do the administrative work of officials in a department store, a state prison and a home for the feeble minded. He will, furthermore, cite the cases of busy men in every institution, who are sent from time to time on advertising tours among actual or potential contributors to the college funds, or in trying to impress upon legislators educational needs which the duties of their position should lead them to discover for themselves. Other professors, in that dreaded mid-career, when household expenses are heaviest and the family purse the lightest, are compelled to deviate from the paths of science into those of finance, searching for supplementary dollars in enervating summer school courses, picture-shows to the *polloi*, or by publishing in a surcharged market 'the first pedagogically perfect' Vergil or composition-book. Under the pressure of these occupations, so our critic declares, the enthusiasm for original investigation must inevitably atrophy, and, when such an overworked man does steal an hour from the professorial day, he spends it in a walk over the city pavements in quest of health, or perhaps in furthering a slight acquaintance which he still maintains with his wife and children. If the study and research that are involved in the preparation of graduate courses result in one tiny opusculum each year, the author is quite content with the number of his intellectual offspring, and at each birth plays the part of a proud father, registering the name and date in the bibliographical records of a journal of philology.

Now, it is needless to say that the man who draws such lugubrious pictures of academic life is usually one who has a passion for scholarly research, a distaste for undergraduate teaching and a profound conviction that he is being cheated out of the quickest way to fame. You cannot cheer his despondency by telling him that the sort of service that the university demands of him and of many others is probably more useful than the rôle which he covets, and any suggestion that those who father and finance college teachers may after all be doing the best they can under adverse circumstances he hails as the sentiments of one who is blind to the cause, if not a traitor. The only